

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

12 APRIL 1965

VICE ADMIRAL WILLIAM FRANCIS RABORN, JR., UNITED STATES NAVY (Ret.)

To Be Nominated by President Johnson as DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

William Francis Raborn, Jr., United States Navy (Retired) will be nominated to the Senate for Director of Central Intelligence, President Johnson announced yesterday (11 April 1965) in Texas. When confirmed, he will be the third Naval officer to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Admiral Raborn is a scientist, a proved administrator, a skilled organizer, a command Naval officer who has been a combat aviator, and has served on destroyers and at gunnery schools. He directed the development of the Navy's Polaris missile and the Navy's fleet ballistic missile system. He was retired from the Navy on 1 September 1963 and became vice president for program-management of the Aerojet General Corporation in California.

With the successful firing of the Polaris in 1960 from the Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarine "George Washington", the following historic message was sent to President Eisenhower:

"Polaris, from out of the deep to target. Perfect"

Vice Admiral Raborn received the Collier Trophy Award, presented by President Kennedy in 1963.

The United States Navy relates Admiral Raborn's biography as follows:

William Francis Raborn, Jr., was born on June 8, 1905 in Decatur, Texas, son of William Francis, Sr., and Mrs. Cornelia V. (Moore) Raborn. He attended grade and high school in Ryan and Marlow, Oklahoma, before his appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, by Senator Elmer Thomas of Oklahoma, in 1924. While a Midshipman he participated in tennis and boxing. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 7, 192<sup>8</sup>~~9~~, he subsequently advanced to the rank of Captain, to date from March 25, 1945. His selection for the rank of Rear Admiral was approved by the President on July 25, 1955, his date of rank January 1, 1956 and was later promoted to Vice Admiral, his date of rank September 1, 1960. X

Following graduation from the Naval Academy in 1928, he had gunnery duty aboard the USS TEXAS until December 1932, after which he had consecutive duty in the destroyers TWIGGS and DICKERSON until June 1933. Completing flight training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, he was designated Naval Aviator on April 16, 1934, and in June of that year joined Fighting Squadron FIVE based aboard the USS LEXINGTON. While in that assignment he participated in the Experimental Cold Weather cruise to Alaska aboard the USS RANGER in January 1936. He continued duty with Fighting Squadron FIVE until June 1936, and for a year thereafter served with Fighting Squadrons TEN and ELEVEN aboard the USS PORTLAND.

Returning to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, in June 1937, he served as an Instructor with Training Squadron FIVE, followed by successive duty with Patrol Squadron ELEVEN and Patrol Wing ONE. In August 1942 he reported as Officer in Charge of the Free Gunnery School, U.S. Naval Air Station, Kaneohe Bay, T.H., and for services in that assignment received a Letter of Commenda- 7

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tion, with authorization to wear the Commendation Ribbon, from the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, which follows in part:

"For meritorious service in the line of his profession as Officer in Charge of the Aviation Free Gunnery School...during the period from December 10, 1941 to March 29, 1943. (He) initiated, developed and organized the Aviation Free Gunnery School in the Hawaiian area under difficult conditions providing instructions to combat crews from the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps whose operations against the enemy have proved to be highly successful, thereby rendering a direct and important contribution to the war effort."

Assigned next to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Air, he served as Head of the Aviation Gunnery Training in the Training Division, from March 1943 to the fall of 1944, after which he joined the USS HANCOCK as Executive Officer. For meritorious service in that carrier, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," the Silver Star Medal, and is entitled to the Ribbon for and facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the officers and men of the HANCOCK. The citations follow in part:

Bronze Star Medal: "For meritorious achievement as Executive Officer of the USS HANCOCK during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Philippine Islands, the South China Sea, Iwo Jima, Okinawa and the Japanese Homeland from November 30, 1944 to September 1, 1945. Demonstrating outstanding ability, Captain Raborn kept his officers and men efficiently organized, trained and ready for combat during these campaigns, thereby contributing materially to their outstanding record with carriers of the Fleet..."

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Silver Star Medal: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as Executive Officer of the USS HANCOCK in action against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of the Nansei Islands on April 7, 1945. When an enemy bomb exploded on the flight deck on his ship, (he) actively supervised the fire fighting and damage control units despite the blinding smoke and large fires that were threatening ammunition on and around the flight deck...(and) rendered invaluable assistance to his commanding officer...and contributed in large measure to the saving of his ship from further damage..."

Navy Unit Commendation - USS HANCOCK: "For outstanding heroism in action against enemy Japanese forces in the air, ashore and afloat in the Pacific war area from October 10, 1944 to August 15, 1945. Operating continuously in the most forward areas, the USS HANCOCK and her groups struck crushing blows toward annihilating Japanese fighting power...Daring and dependable in combat, the HANCOCK with her gallant officer and men rendered loyal service in achieving the ultimate defeat of the Japanese Empire."

For two years, June 1945 - June 1947 he served as Chief of Staff to Commander Task Force THIRTY EIGHT and Commander Carrier Division TWO (USS PRINCETON, Flagship) in the Western Pacific. He next had duty as Operations Officer on the staff of Commander Fleet Air, West Coast, with headquarters in San Diego, California, and in July 1949 was assigned to the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, Washington, D.C. In July 1950 he assumed command of the USS BAIROKO and for "meritorious service...(in that command) while that vessel was conducting training in anti-submarine warfare in waters off Japan, Okinawa and Formosa from November 29, 1950 to August 1, 1951..." he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Bronze Star Medal. The citation continues in part:

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"Charged with the responsibility of organizing a crew of officers and men capable of conducting around-the-clock "Hunter Killer" operations, Captain Raborn was highly successful in effectively coordinating his units into a smoothly functioning team. A capable and inspiring leader, he was directly instrumental in further developing the efficient operations of his ship during training exercises and in welding his command into an effective unit capable of carrying out unlimited combat operations..."

From August 1951 to June 1952 he attended the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, and the next month reported as Assistant Director of the Guided Missiles Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department. He continued to serve there until April 1954, when he assumed command of the USS BENNINGTON. He received a Letter of Commendation, with authorization to wear the Bronze Star in lieu of a Second Commendation Ribbon, for "meritorious conduct as Commanding Officer of the USS BENNINGTON (CVA-20), when that vessel experienced a series of violent explosions while conducting air operations seventy-five miles south of Newport, Rhode Island, on May 26, 1954. With fires, dense smoke and intense heat spreading throughout the forward section of the ship and causing death or injury to 220 officers and men, Captain Raborn skillfully and efficiently directed the efforts of personnel in clearing the flight deck, combatting the fire, removing casualties and preventing further spread of the damage. After assuring himself that everything possible was being done to evacuate casualties and to control damage, he went below to aid and comfort the injured. By his outstanding leadership, courage and inspiring efforts throughout, Captain Raborn was instrumental in saving many lives and in controlling the damage to his vessel..."

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Ordered detached from the BENNINGTON in February 1955, he served as Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations on the staff of the Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, and on December 5, 1955 reported as Director of Special Projects, Department of the Navy.

He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for "exceptionally meritorious service...from December 2, 1955 to July 20, 1960..." The citation further states in part: "In late 1955, Rear Admiral Raborn was charged with the task of developing a Fleet Ballistic Missile System. Exhibiting outstanding organizational ability and technical competence, he established the Special Projects Office, Department of the Navy, and directed his attention to the inauguration of definitive management methods which would provide not only the necessary degree of control but insure that expenditures would be in accord with budgetary considerations as well as the urgency of the program. He established a single yet forceful management system which encompassed all elements of his responsibility, implementing a totally new management tool - the Progress Evaluation Reporting Technique. The widespread adoption of this method of evaluating the progress of a complex research and development program by large sections of American industry reflects his keen perception and resourcefulness. Rear Admiral Raborn's dynamic leadership, enthusiasm and initiative were the motivating factors in the successful accomplishment of this important task when, on July 20, 1960, the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (SSBN-598) proved the operational readiness of the Fleet Ballistic Missile System by launching two POLARIS missiles from the ocean depths. This deterrent signalled an historical contribution to the military strength of the United States and attested to Rear Admiral Raborn's extraordinary executive methods by bringing the Fleet Ballistic Missile System into being in the short period of three and one half years..."

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On March 9, 1962 he became Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Development), Navy Department.

In addition to the Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star Medal, the Bronze Star Medal with Gold Star, the Commendation Ribbon with Bronze Star, and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Vice Admiral Raborn has the American Defense Service Medal; the American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one silver star and one bronze star (six engagements); the World War II Victory Medal; the National Defense Service Medal; the Korean Service Medal; the United Nations Service Medal; and the Philippine Defense Ribbon.

Vice Admiral Raborn's official home address was when he retired 434 Breese Boulevard, Terrill Heights, San Antonio, Texas. He is married to the former Mildred T. Terrill of Baytown, Texas. He has two children, Barbara Priscilla (Mrs. E. E. Richardson), and William F. Raborn, III.

(See also Who's Who, 1964-1965, p. 1634)

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